

CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST (SW/AW)
JOHN S. LILL
UNITED STATES NAVY

Chief John S. Lill was born in St. Petersburg, FL, the son of a Chief Warrant Officer 4 in the Coast Guard and raised in several towns on both the east and gulf coast before settling in Houma, LA., where he attended public school from grades 7-12. During his junior year in high school, he became fascinated with black and white photography and the use of multi-media to tell a story. While attending South Terrebonne High School in Bourg, LA he served as the editor of both the school newspaper and Yearbook during his senior year graduating with honors in 1993.

Following graduation, he followed in the steps of his grandfather and father before him by enlisting in the United States Navy and chose the career field of photographer's mate. After basic training at RTC Orlando, FL., he attended photographer's mate "A" school at the Defense Photography School located at NAS Pensacola, FL. His first duty assignment was as a staff photographer on board USS Inchon (LPH 12) at Naval Station Norfolk, VA from April 1994 to July 1998. While on board, he documented the ship's conversion in Pascagoula, Miss to a Mine Countermeasure support ship (MCS) which later was home ported in Ingleside, TX. During this tour he won three CHINFO Merit Awards, deployed in support of Operation Deny Flight in Bosnia and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia and qualified as enlisted aviation warfare specialist. While on board USS Inchon, he advanced in rank from Airman Apprentice to Petty Officer Second Class.



After more than four and a half years of sea duty, he transferred to Defense Information School at Ft. Meade, MD where he attended the video production "C" school in which he graduated at the top of his class. Following this assignment, he reported to Fleet Aviation Specialized Operational Training Group Pacific (FASOTRAGRUPAC) det Whidbey Island, WA in 1999. During this assignment as an independent duty photographer, he qualified for fixed wing flight in the EA-6B Prowler and was responsible for creating in flight air crew training videos.

In July 2002, he reported to Pre-Commissioning Unit Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) in Newport News, VA., for his second sea tour. During this five-year tour he was a crew member for the ship's first two deployments, qualified as enlisted surface warfare specialist and advanced to first class petty officer. During his tour, the ship's newly formed Graphics Media Department achieved a level of unprecedented success, winning 17 CHINFO Merit Awards and receiving worldwide recognition for the ship's team of public affairs professionals.

In July 2007, he transferred to the White House Communications Agency, where upon arrival; he was notified by President George W. Bush that he had been selected for Chief Petty Officer. During his service with President Bush, he was responsible for the broadcast operations center, White House Press Lobby and was the Leading Chief for White House Television providing documentary coverage and television feeds enabling the Commander-in-Chief to speak to audiences on a national and global scale.

In January 2009, in addition to his prior duties, he was selected as a military advisor to the speech writing team for President Barack Obama and served as the official White House teleprompter for all Presidential speaking engagements to include the 2009 Presidential Inauguration and visiting heads of state.

In July 2010, he returned to sea duty in the San Diego area as the public affairs officer for the Navy's newest amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8). Leading a team of eight mass communication specialists, he developed a comprehensive media and communications plan to highlight the ship's unique hybrid propulsion during its maiden deployment in 2011-2012. Under his leadership, USS Makin Island was the recipient of three consecutive Thompson Ravitz awards in the categories of Public Relations and Internal Communication.

In July 2012, he was selected as the public affairs officer for the first CPO Legacy Academy to be held aboard the Midway museum. During this intensive week of Navy heritage for newly selected Chief Petty Officers, he served as spokesman, coordinated national television coverage, photographed and released numerous articles highlighting the Navy's commitment to leadership, history and heritage on board the historic aircraft carrier and the San Diego area.

Chief Lill currently serves as the Public Affairs Officer for Navy Recruiting District Seattle, the largest district in the nation encompassing the states Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska.

His awards include the Presidential Service Badge, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (four awards), Navy Good Conduct Medal (five awards), Navy "E" Ribbon (three awards), Armed Forces Expeditionary medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, National Defense Medal (two awards), and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (four awards).